

P 080608Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3131
HQ EPA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
INFO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 05 ROME 001726

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCIENCE ADVISOR NEUREITER
EUR/ERA FOR HEN-NIL,
EB FOR GADSDEN
EB/TPP/ATT FOR PEREZ
E FOR SHUB,
OES A/S TURNER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 01726 02 OF 05 080658Z
STATE PASS USTR FOR STROJE, NOVELLI
STATE PASS USDA FOR APHIS:SMCCAMMON, USDA/FAS:BLUM
USDA/FAS/ITT:EJONES, USDA/FAS/OA:SLUTSKY
USDA/OS/HEGWOOD
STATE PASS FDA FOR EFLAMM
EPA FOR OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATOR
NSC FOR EDSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2012

TAGS: EAGR ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO WTOEAGR WTOEAGR
SUBJECT: ITALY'S WRONG TURN ON BIOTECH: WHAT WE SHOULD DO

WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE QUALITY OVER QUANTITY IN
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

15. (C) THE READER NEED NOT BE PARTICULARLY DISCERNING IN
ORDER TO FIND A STRONG ANTI-BIOTECH THEME BETWEEN THE LINES
OF THE PAPER. THE SHAPE OF THE DEBATE THE PAPER WOULD FOSTER
EMERGES FROM THE DERIVATIVE PRESUMPTIONS AND QUESTIONS
PRESENTED IN THESE THREE SUBSECTIONS. THE PAPER CLEVERLY
LINKS BIOTECHNOLOGY TO TWO OF THE MAJOR BOGEYMAN IN ITALIAN
PUBLIC OPINION -- GLOBALIZATION AND MAD COW DISEASE.
GLOBALIZATION IN THIS CONTEXT REFERS TO A SMALL CLIQUE OF
HUGE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (MOSTLY AMERICAN) THAT
MANUFACTURE HIGH VOLUME, LOW COST, "ENGINEERED" FOODS THAT
"TEND INEVITABLY TO INTRODUCE A FLATTENING" OF QUALITY IN
FAVOR OF COST CONTAINMENT AND PROFIT MAXIMIZATION. THE
CONSUMER VIEW IS PRESENTED PRIMARILY BY SUMMARIZING A PUBLIC
OPINION SURVEY FINDING THAT ITALIANS MAY ACCEPT AGRICULTURAL
BIOTECH AS A MEANS OF FEEDING THE THIRD WORLD, BUT 79 PERCENT
BELIEVE ITS INTRODUCTION HERE WOULD DAMAGE THE ITALIAN FOOD
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 01726 02 OF 05 080658Z
SYSTEM. BSE IS SLIPPED INTO A DISCUSSION OF THE POTENTIAL
PROPAGATION OF BIOTECH SEEDS AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE HORRORS
THAT CAN DERIVE FROM A BIOLOGICAL PHENOMENON THAT MAY BE
CONTROLLABLE TODAY BUT MAY NOT BE CONTROLLABLE TOMORROW.

HAVE YOU STOPPED BEATING YOUR WIFE AND OTHER QUESTIONS FOR
DEBATE

16. (C) THE PAPER WINDS THROUGH A MURKY MIXTURE OF DERIVATIVE
QUESTIONS OFFERED FOR DEBATE AND PUTATIVE SCIENTIFIC AXIOMS
THAT PROGRESSIVELY STEER THE DISCUSSION TOWARDS ANTI-BIOTECH
POLITICAL CONCLUSIONS AND AWAY FROM SCIENCE-BASED DEBATE.
THE SUBSECTION ON THE ITALIAN FOOD SYSTEM IS ILLUSTRATIVE.
THE SUBSECTION FIRST SUGGESTS, RATHER NEUTRALLY, THAT "THE
QUESTION POSED IS WHETHER AND IN WHAT MEASURE THE DECISION TO
IMPROVE QUALITY CAN BE COMPATIBLE WITH USE OF TRANSGENIC
ORGANISMS." IN CASE THE READER HAS DIFFICULTY ANSWERING THE
QUESTION, THE PAPER OFFERS A LESS SUBTLE REPHRASING: "WE MUST
CALMLY EVALUATE WHETHER THE IMAGE AND CREDIBILITY OF OUR FOOD
SYSTEM CAN BE DAMAGED BY THE PRESENCE OF TRANSGENIC ORGANISMS
THAT, LEAVING ASIDE CONSIDERATION OF NEGATIVE AFFECTS ON
HEALTH AND FOOD QUALITY, CARRY A STIGMA OF INDUSTRIAL
ENGINEERING THAT APPEARS TO BE IN COMPLETE CONFLICT WITH THE
WORLD'S IMAGE OF OUR FOOD PRODUCTS." FOR THE TRULY DENSE,
THE PAPER PROVIDES A SLEDGEHAMMER THIRD FORMULATION: "THIS
EVALUATION MUST, MOREOVER, TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE COLLECTIVE
INTEREST IN PRESERVING THE BIOLOGIC PATRIMONY OF OUR
AGRICULTURE FROM THE INEVITABLE GENETIC POLLUTION DERIVING
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ROME 01726 02 OF 05 080658Z
FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF TRANSGENIC ORGANISMS."

17. (C) THE SUBSECTION ON ITALIAN LAND AND ENVIRONMENT ALSO
SHOWS PROGRESSIVE SHRILLNESS AND LOSS OF OBJECTIVITY. THE
SUBSECTION FIRST SUGGESTS THAT "RELATIONS OF THE DIVERSE
FORMS OF AGRICULTURE AMONG THEMSELVES AND BETWEEN THEM AND
NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS ARE TWO ASPECTS TO CONSIDER WITH
PARTICULAR ATTENTION AS WE EVALUATE THE BENEFITS OF USING OR
NOT USING TRANSGENIC PRODUCTS." A BLAND DISCUSSION OF THE
DESIRABILITY OF AVOIDING POLLUTION QUICKLY MORPHS TO A
CONDEMNATION OF "GENETIC POLLUTION" AND WE HAVE: "WE MUST BE
AWARE THAT THE EVENTUAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF SEPARATING THE TWO
LINES (GMO AND GMO-FREE) AND AVOIDING GENETIC POLLUTION COULD
PRODUCE A SITUATION OF OBVIOUS INCOMPATIBILITY WITH THE
MAINTENANCE OF ACTIVITIES -- SUCH AS ORGANIC FARMING AND
PRODUCTION OF QUALITY PRODUCTS (FOR EXAMPLE PARMIGIANO
CHEESE) -- THAT DO NOT ALLOW EITHER USE OR CONTAMINATION BY
TRANSGENIC PRODUCTS." THE SUBSECTION ENDS BY REMOVING ANY
PRETENSE OF OBJECTIVITY: "IT IS EVIDENT THAT USE OF
TRANSGENIC PRODUCTS COULD PRODUCE POLLUTION THAT COULD MEAN
THE LOSS OF THOSE CHARACTERISTICS THAT TODAY DIFFERENTIATE
OUR AGRICULTURE IN THE MARKETPLACE." PRESUMABLY, PARLIAMENT
IS LEFT TO DEBATE WHETHER ITALY SHOULD ALLOW CHEAP, LOW
QUALITY IMPORTS INTO ITS MARKET IN THE CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE THAT
DOING SO WILL DESTROY ITALIAN AGRICULTURE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ6533

PAGE 01 ROME 01726 03 OF 05 080659Z
ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AGRE-00 AID-00 AIT-03 ACQ-00 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 CTME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 PERC-00 SRPP-00

DS-00 EB-00 EXIM-01 E-00 FAAE-00 VC-00 FRB-00
HHS-01 H-01 TEDE-00 INR-00 ITC-01 L-00 VCE-00
AC-01 NSAE-00 OES-01 OMB-01 OPIC-01 PA-00 PC-01
PM-00 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 SCT-00 SP-00 SSO-00
SS-00 STR-00 TRSE-00 T-00 USIE-00 BBG-00 EPAAE-00
PMB-00 DSCC-00 DRL-02 G-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00 /015W
-----8073EA 080659Z /38

P 080608Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3132
HQ EPA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
INFO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 05 ROME 001726

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCIENCE ADVISOR NEUREITER
EUR/ERA FOR HEN-NIL,
EB FOR GADSDEN
EB/TPP/ATT FOR PEREZ
E FOR SHUB,
OES A/S TURNER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 01726 03 OF 05 080659Z
STATE PASS USTR FOR STROJE, NOVELLI
STATE PASS USDA FOR APHIS:SMCCAMMON, USDA/FAS:BLUM
USDA/FAS/ITT:EJONES, USDA/FAS/OA:SLUTSKY
USDA/OS/HEGWOOD
STATE PASS FDA FOR EFLAMM
EPA FOR OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATOR
NSC FOR EDSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2012

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [WTOEAGR](#) [WTOEAGR](#)
SUBJECT: ITALY'S WRONG TURN ON BIOTECH: WHAT WE SHOULD DO

18. (C) THE ITALIAN FOOD SYSTEM SUBSECTION NEVER RETURNS TO THE LEFT ASIDE DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE HEALTH AND FOOD QUALITY EFFECTS OF BIOTECH. IN FACT, SO MARGINALIZED IS SCIENCE IN THIS DOCUMENT THAT NOWHERE IN ITS 37 PAGES ARE THE SUPPOSEDLY AXIOMATIC HEALTH AND FOOD QUALITY EFFECTS DOCUMENTED. ALFMANNO'S EVIDENT FEAR OF SCIENCE (HE IS A HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATE WHO CLAIMED NO EXPERTISE IN AGRICULTURE PRIOR TO LANDING THE JOB AS MINISTER) LEAVES MANY OF THE PAPER'S CONCLUSIONS HANGING WITHOUT FOUNDATION AND MAY MAKE EASIER THE TASK OF OPPOSING THE PROPOSED POLICY. RATHER THAN SUMMARIZING REASONED SCIENTIFIC CONCERN ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR MAINTAINING A BIOTECH-FREE PRODUCTION OPTION WHEN CONVENTIONAL SEEDS ARE PLANTED IN PROXIMITY TO BIOTECH SEEDS, THE SUBSECTION ON LAND AND THE ENVIRONMENT CONDEMNS ALL BIOTECH PRODUCTS AS EVENTUALLY AND INEVITABLY POLLUTING ITALIAN PRODUCTION OR CONTAMINATING THE IMAGE OF ITALIAN PRODUCTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 01726 03 OF 05 080659Z

WORST OF THE REST

19. (SBU) FOLLOWING IS COMMENTARY ON OTHER PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS OF THE WHITE PAPER.

-- REJECT U.S. SEEDS. THE PAPER SUGGESTS THAT "THE PHENOMENON OF UNCONTROLLED CONTAMINATION" BY TRANSGENIC ORGANISMS CAN BE AVOIDED ONLY BY ENACTING INCENTIVES FOR ITALIAN SEED SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND, IN THE MEANWHILE, BY DEVELOPING SUPPLY CHANNELS WITH COUNTRIES THAT CAN CERTIFY SEEDS AS BIOTECH-FREE AND AVOIDING IMPORT OF SEEDS FROM OTHER SOURCES AND, IN PARTICULAR, THE "UNITED STATES FROM WHERE, ACCORDING TO THE CHECKS EFFECTED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, MOST CONTAMINATED SEEDS ORIGINATE." IN MAKING THIS DISCRIMINATORY SUGGESTION, THE PAPER MAKES NO MENTION THAT THE U.S. SEED PRODUCERS CAN, FOR A PREMIUM, PRODUCE CERTIFIED GMO-FREE SEED.

-- SCIENCE: PERSUASION BY OMISSION. IN THE NAME OF ELIMINATING "USELESS AND DAMAGING" POLEMICS, THE PAPER SIMPLY OMITTS OPPOSING ARGUMENTS. NOT A SINGLE SCIENTIFIC CITATION IS INCLUDED IN THE 37 PAGE PAPER, AND THE FIFTEEN YEARS OF EU FUNDED RESEARCH RECENTLY SUMMARIZED IN A EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPORT IS NOT MENTIONED. THE ADVANCES IN ITALIAN BIOTECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING VIRAL AND FUNGAL RESISTANT PRODUCTS NOW READY FOR FIELD TESTING, ARE IGNORED. THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF REDUCED USAGE OF HERBICIDES AND PESTICIDES, AS WELL THE PRODUCTION BENEFITS OF DROUGHT TOLERANCE AND STRESS RESISTANCE ARE OVERLOOKED. THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ROME 01726 03 OF 05 080659Z
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ARE QUICKLY SHUNTED ASIDE AS NOT RELEVANT TO QUALITY CONSCIOUS ITALIAN CONSUMERS.

-- INTERPRET EU SAFEGUARDS CLAUSE AS OPT-OUT CLAUSE. THE PAPER DESCRIBES ARTICLE 16 OF EU DIRECTIVE 90/220 AND ARTICLE 12 OF RULE 258/97 AS RESERVING TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES THE RIGHT "TO SUSPEND COMMERCIALIZATION ON ITS TERRITORY OF A TRANSGENIC PRODUCT WHENEVER THAT STATE DETERMINES, FOR VALID SCIENTIFIC REASONS, THAT IT IS NOXIOUS FOR HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT. ARTICLE 23 OF NEW EU DIRECTIVE 2001/18, ACCORDING TO THE WHITE PAPER, CONTINUES TO ALLOW INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES TO LIMIT OR PROHIBIT THE USE OR SALE ON ITS TERRITORY OF ANY PRODUCT AUTHORIZED BY THE COMMISSION." PERHAPS LOOKING TO EXPAND ON ITALY'S OWN PRECEDENT, THE PAPER MAKES NO MENTION OF THE "VALID SCIENTIFIC REASON" PREREQUISITE TO WHICH THE GOI AT LEAST PAID LIP SERVICE IN ENACTING ITS 2000 BAN ON FOUR VARIETIES OF BIOTECH CORN APPROVED FOR COMMERCIALIZATION BY THE EU.

-- ITALY CAN REJECT BIOTECH WITHOUT VIOLATING EU NORMS. THE PAPER SUGGESTS THAT ITALY MAY CHOOSE TO GO ITS OWN WAY ON BIOTECH POLICY. "WITHOUT DOUBT RECENT EVOLUTION OF EU LEGISLATION INTRODUCES A GROWING OPENING TO THE USE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY. THIS, HOWEVER, DOES NOT MEAN THAT, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT FOR THE NORMS, OUR FOOD SYSTEM CANNOT CHOOSE ITS

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 01726 04 OF 05 080659Z
ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	AIT-03	ACQ-00	CEA-01
	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00
	HHS-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	L-00	VCE-00
	AC-01	NSAE-00	OES-01	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PC-01
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	BBG-00	EPAE-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/015W

-----8073F1 080659Z /38

P 080608Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3133
HQ EPA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
INFO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 05 ROME 001726

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCIENCE ADVISOR NEUREITER
EUR/ERA FOR HEN-NIL,
EB FOR GADSDEN
EB/TPP/ATT FOR PEREZ
E FOR SHUB,
OES A/S TURNER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 01726 04 OF 05 080659Z
STATE PASS USTR FOR STROJE, NOVELLI
STATE PASS USDA FOR APHIS:SMCCAMMON, USDA/FAS:BLUM
USDA/FAS/ITT:EJONES, USDA/FAS/OA:SLUTSKY
USDA/OS/HEGWOOD
STATE PASS FDA FOR EFLAMM
EPA FOR OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATOR
NSC FOR EDSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2012

TAGS: [EAGR ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO ECON ETRD IT PREL TBIO WTOEAGR WTOEAGR](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY'S WRONG TURN ON BIOTECH: WHAT WE SHOULD DO

OWN WAY OF DEVELOPMENT UNLINKED TO TRANSGENICS. FORSEEING A
GREATER OPENING FOR TRANSGENIC ORGANISMS DOES NOT MEAN, IN
FACT, A PROHIBITION THAT, IF DEEMED BENEFICIAL, WE COULD
FOLLOW THE OBJECTIVE OF HAVING AN GMO-FREE FOOD SYSTEM."

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

¶10. (C) POST REACTED QUICKLY AND STRONGLY TO THE ADVENT OF
THE WHITE PAPER. AMBASSADOR SEMBLER MET SEPARATELY WITH
MINISTER OF HEALTH SIRCHIA AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND
RESEARCH MORATTI, FOUND EACH UNAWARE OF THE PAPER, PRESENTED
COPIES, AND -- AFTER ELICITING REACTIONS FAVORABLE TO OUR
INTERESTS -- POINTED THEM TO EACH OTHER AS POTENTIAL ALLIES
WITHIN THE BERLUSCONI CABINET. SIRCHIA HAS ASKED FOR A
POSITION PAPER FROM US AND MORATTI ASKED FOR TALKING POINTS
SHE MIGHT USE WITHIN THE GOI. BOTH WILL BE DELIVERED THIS
WEEK. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO WROTE ENVIRONMENT MINISTER
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 01726 04 OF 05 080659Z
MATTEOLI TO ASK HIS ASSISTANCE IN FURTHERING SCIENCE-BASED
DISCUSSIONS. VISITING CONGRESSMAN BILL YOUNG MADE SIMILAR
APPROACHES TO HIS LONG-TIME FRIEND AND PROTEGE DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER GIANFRANCO FINI AND TO DEPUTY MINISTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADOLFO URSO AT THE AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST.
THE DCM MET WITH GIANI CASTELLANETA, PM BERLUSCONI'S TOP
DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR, EDUCATED HIM ON THE ISSUE, AND ELICITED A
PROMISE TO LOOK CAREFULLY INTO OUR CONCERNS.

¶11. (C) BY SEPTEL, THE AMBASSADOR IS APPEALING DIRECTLY TO
AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VENNEMAN, EPA ADMINISTRATOR WHITMAN,
UNDERSECRETARY LARSON, AND NSC SENIOR ADVISOR EDSON TO
COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THEIR ITALIAN COUNTERPARTS.
APPROPRIATE TALKING POINTS, ETC. ARE BEING COORDINATED
BETWEEN POST AND WASHINGTON AGENCIES.

WHAT MORE WE SHOULD DO ABOUT IT

¶12. (C) AS POST REPEATS IN EVERY AVAILABLE CONTEXT, THE GOI
DECISIONS ON BIOTECH ULTIMATELY ARE TAKEN BY ONLY ONE SOURCE
-- PRIME MINISTER BERLUSCONI. MINISTER ALEMANNI HAS TAKEN
THE INITIATIVE SIMPLY BECAUSE THE PM HAS BEEN SILENT FOR
SEVERAL MONTHS, AND A VACUUM HAS THUS BEEN CREATED.
BERLUSCONI CAN CERTAINLY REIN IN ALEMANNI AT THIS POINT,
ALTHOUGH THAT CONTROL BECOMES MOOT WHEN PARLIAMENT GETS THE
DOCUMENT AND BEGINS ITS OWN DEBATE.

¶13. (C) WE HAVE BEEN SURPRISED BY THE LACK OF AWARENESS EVEN
OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE ALEMANNI WHITE PAPER WITHIN THE GOI.
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ROME 01726 04 OF 05 080659Z
THE COPIES DISTRIBUTED WITHIN THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES SEEM TO
HAVE COME ONLY FROM US. WE ARE PUTTING TOGETHER A CLIQUE OF
RIGHT-MINDED MINISTERS WITHIN THE CABINET AND BRIEFING SENIOR
ADVISORS ACROSS THE GOI.

¶14. (C) HOWEVER, THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR USG COMMUNICATION
WITH THE PM. BERLUSCONI IS, AT LEAST FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL
WEEKS, ITALY'S FOREIGN MINISTER AS WELL AS ITS PRIME
MINISTER. SECRETARY POWELL, THEREFORE, WOULD HAVE A PROTOCOL
ENTREE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BERLUSCONI THAT MAY PROVE OF
GREAT VALUE AND PAVE THE WAY FOR A PRESIDENT BUSH-PRIME
MINISTER BERLUSCONI COMMUNICATION. DEPENDING ON THE RESULTS
OF ACTIONS TAKEN PURSUANT TO REF A, POST MAY RECOMMEND THAT
WASHINGTON INVOLVEMENT CULMINATE IN THIS HIGHER LEVEL DIRECT
COMMUNICATION.

¶15. (SBU) THE FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOR USE
IN PRIMING THE VARIOUS COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WE PROPOSE
ACTIVATING.

-- THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE IS CIRCULATING AN UNSIGNED DRAFT PAPER ENTITLED "TRANSGENIC ORGANISMS AND AGRICULTURE: THE TIME FOR CHOICES." PRESUMABLY THIS IS AN EARLY VERSION OF THE POLICY PAPER MINISTER ALEMANNO HAS ANNOUNCED HE INTENDS TO BRING BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ6535

PAGE 01 ROME 01726 05 OF 05 080659Z
ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	AIT-03	ACQ-00	CEA-01
	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00
	HHS-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	L-00	VCE-00
	AC-01	NSAE-00	OES-01	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PC-01
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	BBG-00	EPAE-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/015W

-----8073F5 080659Z /38

P 080608Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3134
HQ EPA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
INFO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 05 OF 05 ROME 001726

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCIENCE ADVISOR NEUREITER
EUR/ERA FOR HEN-NIL,
EB FOR GADSDEN
EB/TPP/ATT FOR PEREZ
E FOR SHUB,
OES A/S TURNER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 01726 05 OF 05 080659Z
STATE PASS USTR FOR STROJE, NOVELLI
STATE PASS USDA FOR APHIS:SMCCAMMON, USDA/FAS:BLUM
USDA/FAS/ITT:EJONES, USDA/FAS/OA:SLUTSKY
USDA/OS/HEGWOOD
STATE PASS FDA FOR EFLAMM
EPA FOR OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATOR
NSC FOR EDSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2012
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PREL](#) [TBIO](#) [WTOEAGR](#) [WTOEAGR](#)
SUBJECT: ITALY'S WRONG TURN ON BIOTECH: WHAT WE SHOULD DO

-- LATER THIS YEAR, THE EU WILL BEGIN IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES FOR APPROVING NEW FOOD PRODUCTS, INCLUDING BIOTECHNOLOGY FOOD PRODUCTS, FOR COMMERCIALIZATION ACROSS THE EU COMMON MARKET. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION WILL CONTINUE TO CONSIDER PROPOSALS FOR MONITORING BIOTECHNOLOGY FOOD PRODUCTS ALREADY APPROVED.

-- AS A MEMBER STATE, IT IS OF COURSE PERFECTLY APPROPRIATE THAT ITALY DEVELOP NATIONAL POSITIONS AS EVENTS IN BRUSSELS GET UNDERWAY.

-- MINISTER ALEMANNO INTENDS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION LEADING ULTIMATELY TO A NATIONAL BIOTECHNOLOGY POLICY. AGAIN, THAT IS OF COURSE PERFECTLY APPROPRIATE.

-- THIS PAPER, HOWEVER, IS OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO MANY IN THE SCIENTIFIC AND BUSINESS COMMUNITIES. THE PAPER DISMISSES SCIENCE AS A DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE IN POLICY DELIBERATIONS AND WOULD BASE ITALIAN BIOTECHNOLOGY POLICY ON PUBLIC OPINION
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 01726 05 OF 05 080659Z
SURVEYS AND THE BASELESS PRONOUNCEMENT THAT BIOTECHNOLOGY IS "POLLUTION" FROM WHICH ITALY MUST BE PROTECTED.

-- CONTINUING IN THIS VEIN, THE PAPER PLAYS UPON PUBLIC FEARS BY ASSOCIATING BIOTECHNOLOGY WITH THE FORCES OF GLOBALIZATION AND EVEN HINTS, WITH NO SCIENTIFIC BASIS WHATSOEVER, THAT BIOTECHNOLOGY MAY TRIGGER THE NEXT BSE-TYPE EPIDEMIC.

-- SOME MONTHS AGO, PRIME MINISTER BERLUSCONI REFORMED THE COMMISSION FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSECURITY, CHAIRED BY PROFESSOR LEONARDO SANTI, TO HELP SHAPE THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON BIOTECHNOLOGY. THE SANTI COMMISSION INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL ITALIAN MINISTRIES AS WELL AS INTERESTED PARTIES FROM INDUSTRY AND CONSUMER GROUPS.

-- THE PSEUDO-SCIENCE INCLUDED IN THE AGRICULTURE MINISTRY'S PAPER MAKES CLEAR THAT THE SANTI COMMISSION WAS NOT CONSULTED IN ITS DRAFTING. NEITHER, EVIDENTLY, WAS THE BROADER SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY. RATHER, THE PAPER APPEARS TO BE THE PRODUCT OF SPECIAL INTERESTS AND A SMALL GROUP OF ANTI-BIOTECH ZEALOTS PURSUING THEIR OWN AGENDA.

-- THIS PAPER NEEDS TO BE CORRECTED BEFORE IT GETS TO PARLIAMENT AND STARTS TO BUILD MOMENTUM.

-- THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S SANTI COMMISSION IS MADE INTEGRAL TO ITALIAN BIOTECHNOLOGY POLICY DEVELOPMENT.MADE INTEGRAL TO ITALIAN BIOTECHNOLOGY POLICY DEVELOPMENT.
SEMBLER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ROME 01726 05 OF 05 080659Z

CONFIDENTIAL

>
2002ROME01726 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL